



The Genitive Alternation in Varieties of English

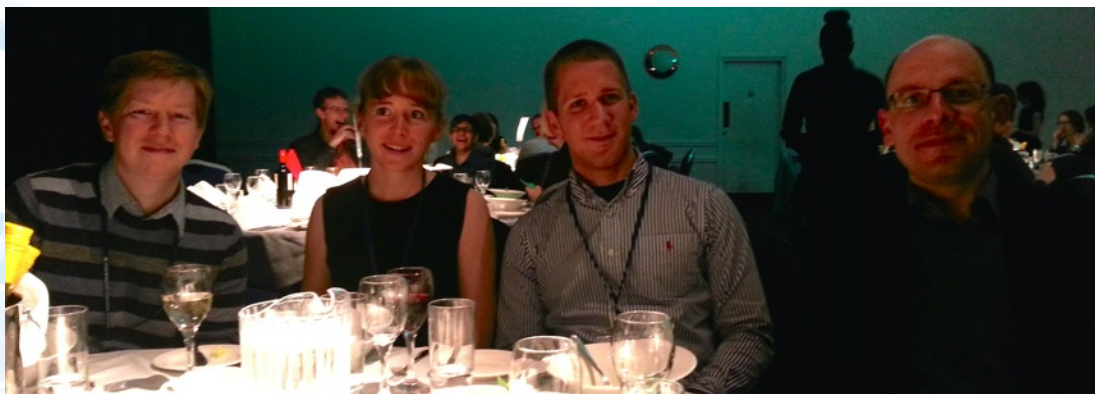
Benedikt Heller

Overview

1. Introduction
2. Research Questions
3. Some Important Factors
 - a. Animacy
 - b. Givenness/Topicality
 - c. Syntactic Weight
 - d. Final Sibilancy
4. Data Extraction and Annotation
5. Statistical Analysis and Expected Results

Introduction

- **Exploring probabilistic grammar(s) in varieties of English around the world**
- Thesis supervised by Benedikt Szmrecsanyi (KU Leuven) and Joybrato Mukherjee (JLU Giessen)
- Other alternations
 - Dative alternation (M. Röthlisberger)
 - Particle placement (J. Grafmiller)
 - Finite/non-finite complementation (B. Szmrecsanyi)
 - ...
- Combination of the **Probabilistic Grammar Framework** and the **English World-Wide Paradigm**



Probabilistic Grammar Framework

- Explore hidden – though cognitively ‘real’ – probabilistic constraints on grammatical variation
- Three crucial assumptions
 1. syntactic variation – and change – is **subtle, gradient & probabilistic** rather than categorical in nature
 2. linguistic knowledge includes **knowledge of probabilities**, and speakers have powerful predictive capacities
 3. corpus-based **regression models match speaker’s predictive abilities** in precise ways

English World-Wide Paradigm

- Wide range of postcolonial VoE (ICE-9)
 - Native varieties (L1), e.g. New Zealand English
 - Second language varieties (L2), e.g. Hong Kong English
 - “language shift” varieties, e.g. Irish English



The Genitive Alternation



(1) The [spokesperson]_{possessum} of [the family]_{possessor}

(2) [The family]_{possessor}'s [spokesperson]_{possessum}

- “Today, genitive variation is arguably **the best researched of all syntactic alternations** in English.” (Rosenbach 2014: 215)

Thomas 1931; Sorheim 1980; Altenberg 1982; Jucker 1993; Anschutz 1997; Rosenbach & Vezzosi 2000; Rosenbach 2002, 2003; Gries 2002; Stefanowitsch 2003; Kreyer 2003; Rosenbach 2005; Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi 2007; Szmrecsanyi & Hinrichs 2008; Szmrecsanyi 2010; Jankowski & Tagliamonte 2014; Hundt & Szmrecsanyi 2012; Szmrecsanyi 2013; Wolk, Bresnan, Rosenbach & Szmrecsanyi 2013; Grafmiller to appear, ...

Research Questions

1. To what extent do VoE share the factors that determine the choice between s-genitive and *of*-genitive? Where do they differ?
2. Are differences random, or can they be explained by sociohistorical factors (e.g. Schneider 2007)?
3. What is the role of modes, registers, or idiolects across VoE?



Some Important Factors

Animacy, Givenness/Topicality,
Syntactic Weight, Final Sibilancy

Animacy

- Most important predictor (cf. Grafmiller to appear: 3, Hinrichs & Szendrői 2007: 464, Rosenbach 2014: 230, *inter alia*)
- Grammar books (e.g. Murphy 2012: 162f.)



-s (your sister's name) and
of ... (the name of the book)

A

We use -s (apostrophe + s) mostly for people or animals:

- ☐ Tom's computer isn't working. (not the computer of Tom)
- ☐ How old are Chris's children? (not the children of Chris)
- ☐ What's (= What is) your sister's name?
- ☐ What's Tom's sister's name?
- ☐ Be careful. Don't step on the cat's tail.

You can use -s without a noun after it:

- ☐ This isn't my book. It's my sister's. (= my sister's book)

We use -s with a noun (Tom/friend/teacher etc.). We do not use -s with a long group of words.

So we say:

your friend's name

but the name of the woman sitting by the door

Note that we say a woman's hat (= a hat for a woman), a boy's name (= a name for a boy), a bird's egg (= an egg laid by a bird) etc.

B

With a singular noun we use -s:

my sister's room (= her room – one sister) Mr Carter's house (= his house)

With a plural noun (sisters, friends etc.) we put an apostrophe (') at the end of the word:

my sisters' room (= their room – two or more sisters)
the Carters' house (= their house – Mr and Mrs Carter)

If a plural noun does not end in -s (for example men/women/children/people) we use -s:

the men's changing room a children's book (= a book for children)

You can use -s after more than one noun:

Jack and Karen's wedding Mr and Mrs Carter's house

C

For things, ideas etc., we normally use of (... of the water / ... of the book etc.):

the temperature of the water (not the water's temperature)
the name of the book the owner of the restaurant

Sometimes the structure noun + noun is possible (see Unit 80):

the water temperature the restaurant owner

We say the beginning/end/middle of ... / the top/bottom of ... / the front/back/side of ... :

the beginning of the month (not the month's beginning)
the top of the hill the back of the car

D

You can usually use -s or of ... for an organisation (= a group of people). So you can say:

the government's decision or the decision of the government
the company's success or the success of the company

It is also possible to use -s for places. So you can say:

the city's streets the world's population Italy's prime minister

E

You can also use -s with time words (yesterday / next week etc.):

- ☐ Do you still have yesterday's newspaper?
- ☐ Next week's meeting has been cancelled.

In the same way, you can say today's / tomorrow's / this evening's / Monday's etc.

We also use -s (or -s' with plural words) with periods of time:

- ☐ I've got a week's holiday starting on Monday.
- ☐ Julia has got three weeks' holiday.
- ☐ I live near the station – it's only about ten minutes' walk.

Exercises

81.1 In some of these sentences, it would be more natural to use -s or -'. Change the underlined parts where necessary.

- 1 Who is the owner of this restaurant?
- 2 How old are the children of Chris?
- 3 Is this the umbrella of your friend?
- 4 Write your name at the top of the page.
- 5 I've never met the daughter of Charles.
- 6 Have you met the son of Helen and Dan?
- 7 We don't know the cause of the problem.
- 8 Do we still have the newspaper of last Monday?
- 9 I don't know the words of this song.
- 10 What is the cost of a new computer?
- 11 The friends of your children are here.
- 12 The garden of our neighbours is very nice.
- 13 I work on the ground floor of the building.
- 14 The hair of David is very long.
- 15 I couldn't go to the party of Katherine.
- 16 Do you know the number of the man I need to speak to?
- 17 Have you seen the car of the parents of Mike?
- 18 What's the meaning of this expression?
- 19 Do you agree with the economic policy of the government?

OK

Chris's children

81.2 What is another way of saying these things? Use -s or -'.

- 1 a hat for a woman a woman's hat
- 2 a name for a boy
- 3 clothes for children
- 4 a school for girls
- 5 a nest for a bird
- 6 a magazine for women

81.3 Read each sentence and write a new sentence beginning with the underlined words.

- 1 The meeting tomorrow has been cancelled.
Tomorrow's meeting has been cancelled.
- 2 The storm last week caused a lot of damage.
Last
- 3 The only cinema in the town has closed down.
The
- 4 The weather in Britain is very changeable.
- 5 Tourism is the main industry in the region.

81.4 Use the information given to complete the sentences.

- 1 If I leave my house at 9 o'clock and drive to the airport, I arrive at about 11.
So it's about two hours' drive from my house to the airport. (drive)
- 2 If I leave my house at 8.40 and walk to the centre, I get there at 9 o'clock.
So it's _____ from my house to the centre. (walk)
- 3 I'm going on holiday on the 12th. I have to be back at work on the 26th.
So I've got _____ (holiday)
- 4 I went to sleep at 3 o'clock this morning and woke up an hour later. After that I couldn't sleep. So last night I only had _____ (sleep)

's (your sister's name) and of ... (the name of the book)

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- ☐ Be careful. Don't step on **the cat's** tail.

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So we say:

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Note that we say **a woman's hat** (= a hat for a woman), **a boy's name** (= a name for a boy),
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With a *plural* noun (**sisters, friends** etc.) we put an apostrophe (') at the end of the word:

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the name **of the book** the owner **of the restaurant**

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Unit 81

-s (your sister's name) and of ... (the name of the book)

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Animacy

- Big player in diachronic changes (Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi 2007)
- Focus on possessor, but relative animacy might also be important
- Categorization
 - ANIMATE, INANIMATE (most common)
 - We use five levels: HUMAN/ANIMAL, COLLECTIVE, LOCATIVE, TEMPORAL, INANIMATE (Wolk et al. 2013)
 - Depending on size of the database

Givenness/Topicality

- If a possessor has been mentioned before, it is GIVEN (contextual determined)

Beer Glassware

In Belgium, every **beer** is served in its own signature glass designed to highlight the beer's special flavor. The Belgian Pouring Ritual and Chalice create a unique connection between the beer and customer adding to a fine dining experience. It brings sophistication to the beer-drinking experience and an enhanced appreciation for the serving process that wine drinkers have been enjoying for years. The most well-known Belgian glass is the Stella Artois Chalice, which releases the beer's flavor and multi-textured aromas. Hoegaarden is offered in a hexagonal glass that showcases its natural cloudiness and spicy coriander aroma. The thickness of the glass also helps maintain the desired serving temperature. Leffe uses a high-stemmed glass, enabling customers to enjoy the beer's delicate malt aroma and robust, creamy warmth.



+ Click image to enlarge

- Given possessors favor the s-genitive
- Automatic vs. manual approach (cf. Hinrichs & Szmrecsanyi 2007 vs. Grafmiller to appear)

Syntactic Weight

(4) *I said to my dad, “I will never ever take speed.”*

(5) **I said “I will never ever take speed” to my dad.*

- **The principle of end weight:**
“the tendency for long and complex elements to be placed towards the end of a clause.”
(Biber et al. 1999: 898)




(6) **whatever happened on November the thirty-first nineteen ninety-two's night.*

(7) *whatever happened on the night of November the thirty-first nineteen ninety-two.*

Syntactic Weight

- Operationalization?

(8) *whatever happened on the night of November the thirty-first nineteen ninety-two.*



| | <i>possessor</i> | <i>possessum</i> | <i>ratio</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>words</i> | <i>7</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3.5</i> |
| <i>characters</i> | <i>45</i> | <i>9</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>syllables</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>6</i> |

Final Sibilant in the Possessor

- [s], [z], [ʃ], [tʃ], [ʒ], or [dʒ]
- If a possessor ends in a sibilant, the genitive construction is less likely to be realized as s-genitive

(11) *The size of the packs*

(12) **The packs's size*

- Pronunciation dictionaries (e.g. CMU Pronunciation Dictionary)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------|---|-----|---|-----|-----|----|-----|---|
| 87777 | PACKINGHOUSE | P | AE1 | K | IH0 | NG | HH | AW2 | S |
| 87778 | PACKMAN | P | AE1 | K | M | AH0 | N | | |
| 87779 | PACKS | P | AE1 | K | S | | | | |
| 87780 | PACKWOOD | P | AE1 | K | W | UH2 | D | | |
| 87781 | PACKWOOD'S | P | AE1 | K | W | UH2 | D | Z | |
| 87782 | PACMAN | P | AE1 | K | M | AH0 | N | | |

Potential Problem: Multicollinearity

- E.g. animacy and syntactic weight
(11) *From Kuhn's particular point of view, this is mistaken*

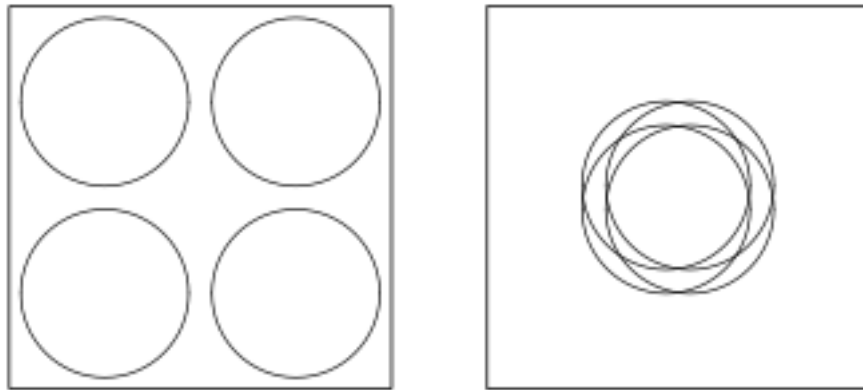


Figure 6.6. *Orthogonal (left) and collinear (right) predictors.*

(Baayen 2008: 182)



Extraction and Annotation



Obtaining Interchangeable Genitives

1. Search for all instances of

- a. 's OR s' *
- b. of

2. Filter results

- a. automatically
(Perl script)
- b. manually
(Web-based
annotation tool)

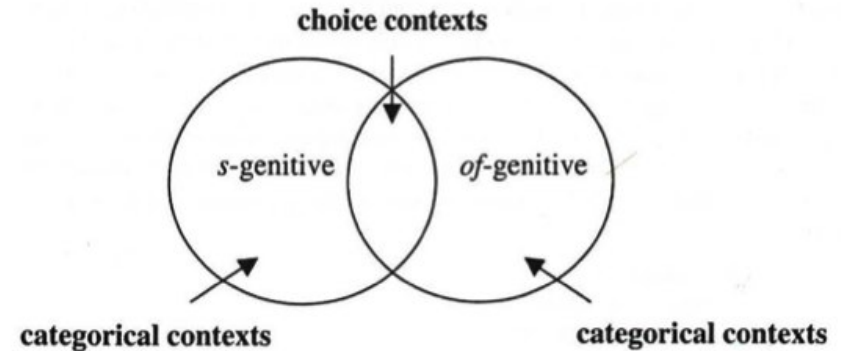


Figure 1. Categorical versus choice contexts

(Rosenbach 2002: 28)

(9) *one of my children*

Automatic Filtering

Dismissed Of Constructions

file:///Users/Benedikt/Dropbox/Academia/PhD/140205_Extraction_of_genitives/Genitive_Extraction/Results/no_of_genitives Reader

Dismissed Of Constructions

| No. | Unit marker | Context left | Node | Context right | Constraint | Violation |
|--------------------|-------------|---|------|--|------------|-----------|
| <i>s1a-001.pos</i> | | | | | | |
| 1 | <#23:1:B> | You have to spend a lot | of | money on it lah so you try | np left | a lot |
| 2 | <#147:1:A> | Uh about three But all | of | us were late ha | word left | all |
| 3 | <#183:1:B> | Ya so quite I think quite a lot | of | things to teach tell them even the catalogue itself | np left | a lot |
| 4 | <#198:1:B> | eight or nine | of | them you know that kind of thing | word right | them |
| 5 | <#198:1:B> | eight or nine of them you know that kind | of | thing | word left | kind |
| 6 | <#200:1:B> | [...] be more because we 're going to have uhm sort | of | teach them link up linc | word left | sort |
| 7 | <#202:1:B> | so there 's going to be lots and lots | of | things to do ya so and then fourth year students [...] | word left | lots |
| 8 | <#207:1:B> | [...] staff or or or you know those experts ha then | of | course I 'm | word right | course |
| 9 | <#213:1:B> | You know most | of | the lecturers | word left | most |
| 10 | <#X229:1:B> | [...] like depends on what because different aspects let 's say | of | architecture and all that you see so I would n't [...] | tag left | say |
| <i>s1a-011.pos</i> | | | | | | |
| 11 | <#14:1:B> | One | of | these day I 'll be speaking in broken English | word left | One |
| 12 | <#19:1:C> | I mean when they come uh and some | of | them lah they 're from very bad schools I mean [...] | word left | some |
| 13 | <#38:1:C> | [...] See probably wo n't have wo n't have that kind | of | problem lah | word left | kind |
| 14 | <#42:1:A> | [...] fact the bankers that I I dealt with uh most | of | them are overseas graduates so they slang a bit when [...] | word left | most |
| 15 | <#61:1:C> | Which part | of | June | word left | part |

Manual Filtering

s-genitives

www.benedikt-heller.de/cgi-bin/ga/ga.pl?display=genitives_s

Dimmer on

s-genitives

| Key | Function |
|-----|---|
| X | Move highlighted dataset to <i>Dismissed</i> |
| C | Move highlighted dataset to <i>Undecided</i> |
| Q | Flag highlighted dataset as <i>Questionable</i> |
| ← | Move to the previous instance |
| → | Move to the following instance |

Number of instances: 404

| No. | Unit marker | Context left | Node | Context right | Possessor | Possessum |
|--------------------|-------------|---|------|---|-----------|-------------------|
| <i>s1a-001_pos</i> | | | | | | |
| 1 | <#47:1:B> | Oh what to be with Randy | 's | family | Randy | family |
| 2 | <#62:1:B> | They 've always done it because of Ian | 's | parents | Ian | parents |
| <i>s1a-011_pos</i> | | | | | | |
| 3 | <#36:1:A> | [...] full now with laugh starts forks spoons knives pronounced 'knives | ' | and things | knives | and things |
| 4 | <#148:1:B> | And I never learned Irish dancing that my father | 's | side of the family 's Irish but I never learned [...] | my father | side |
| 5 | <#151:1:A> | It | 's | fun | It | fun |
| 6 | <#158:1:A> | [...] know so that they can read them better Now Donny | 's | writing is is very good I mean it 's it [...] | Donny | writing |
| <i>s1a-021_pos</i> | | | | | | |
| 7 | <#29:1:B> | I think it was like Sally | 's | Memorable Moments or Unforgotten Moments and they show like huh [...] | Sally | Memorable Moments |

<http://www.benedikt-heller.de/ga>

Work Plan – Major Goals

- 2014: Finish interchangeability coding for ICE-GB, ICE-India, ICE-Canada (if possible also ICE-Singapore)
- 2015: Finish interchangeability coding and factor annotation, publish preliminary results
- 2016: Statistical analysis
- 2017: Write up thesis



Statistical Analysis



Multilevel Mixed-Effects Models

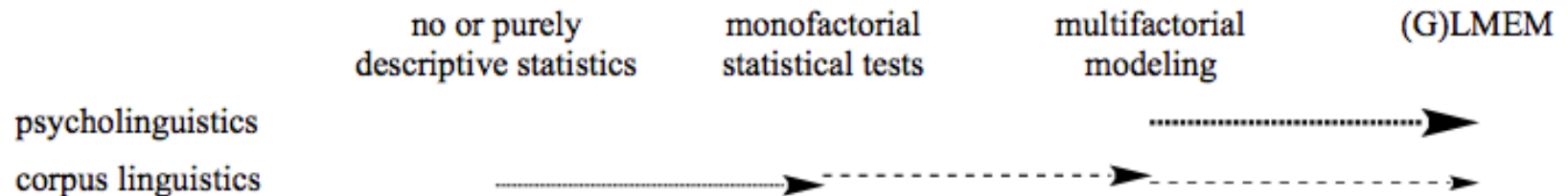
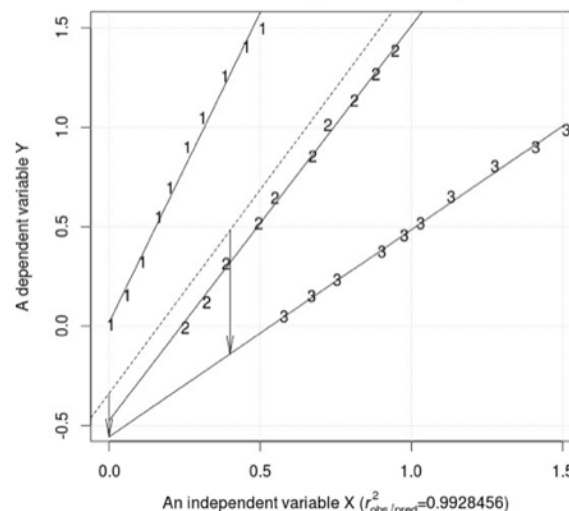
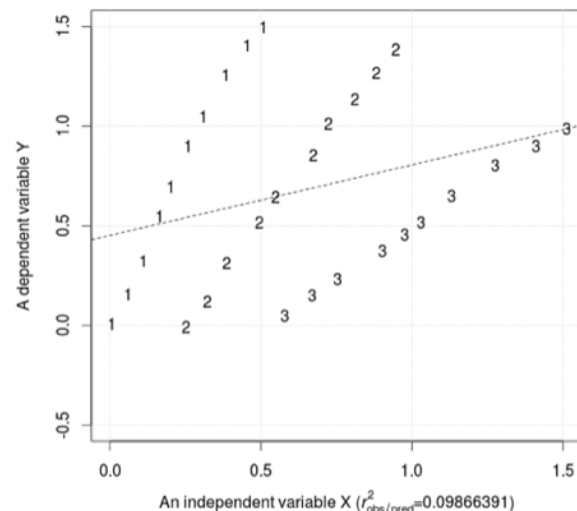


Figure 1: Evolution of statistical methods in psycholinguistics and corpus linguistics

(Gries to appear: 3)

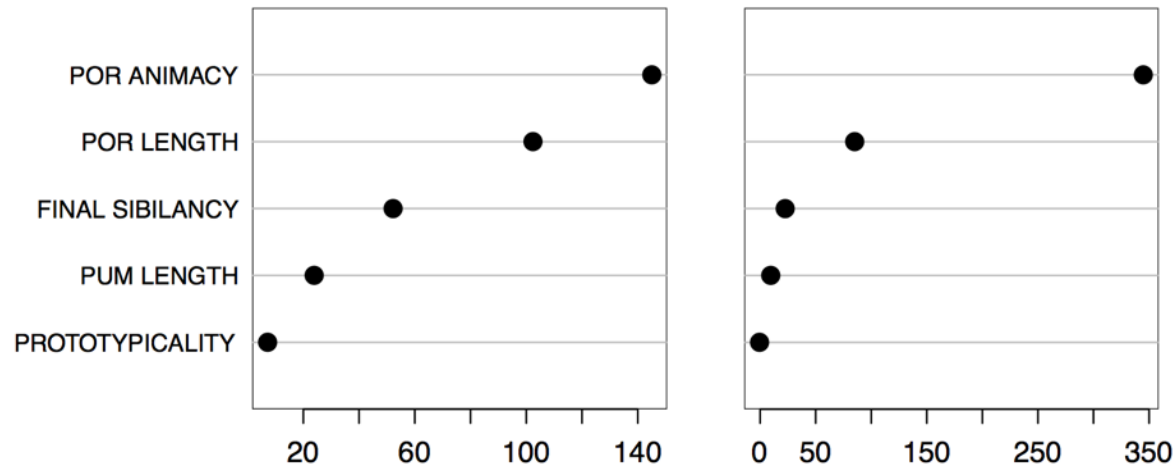
Multilevel Mixed-Effects Models



(Gries to appear: 10, 11)

- **Random effects** can account for idiosyncrasies of speakers, modes, genres, words, etc. (cf. Gelman & Hill 2007: 245f.)
- Hierarchical structure of corpora

Expected Results



(Hundt and Szmrecsanyi 2012: 258)

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